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**Wedding Band Worksheet**

**1. In the space below, describe the stasis at the beginning of Wedding Band. In other words, “Where are we?” “When is it (time, day, and year)?” “Who are the people involved?” “What is the dramatic situation in which the characters find themselves as the play unfolds?”**

The play Wedding Band is set in Summer of 1918 in a poor black community (specifically in the backyards of three neighboring cottages), on a Saturday morning in a city by the sea in South Carolina. The characters in this play are Julia and Herman (the interracial couple), Fanny (The landlady), Mattie and Teeta (Julia’s neighbors), Lula and Nelson (Julia’s other neighbors), Princess (the little girl Mattie watches), The Bellman, and Herman’s sister and mother. Julia and Herman are an interracial couple who have been together for 10 years, the dramatic situation is that Herman is trying to buy Julia a ticket to New York so that they can get married, but the next day he falls ill. Mattie, Lula, and Fanny find out about Julia’s relationship with Herman, and Julia has to juggle her life as Herman’s love, and her life as a woman in the Southern black community.  
  
**2. What is the intrusion that causes the stasis to be broken and the dramatic action to develop, often at an increasingly rapid pace, to the end of the play? NOTE: Arguments might be made for several different points where stasis is broken. Be prepared to defend your point of view, if different from other students.**

I would argue that the intrusion is the introduction of the Bell Man. He comes around the three yards to sell goods and pick up a debt from Lula, and Julia attempts to distract him from Lula by buying sheets. At this point the Bell Man follows her into her house and sits tries to exploit her for sex, offering to trade her in tights. This is the first moment where the play shows how deep the divide between whites and blacks is. If the Bell Man had been selling his wares to a white woman, he probably wouldn’t have felt entitled enough to ask her for sex. The scene in general intrudes upon the family-like community of neighbors that these women create.

**3. Why do the events of the play take place at this particular time and place? In other words, what is the unique factor which is out of the ordinary that causes a turn of events to take place?**  
  
The unique factor in this play is Herman’s illness, this is the day that Herman becomes sick and ultimately dies, ending the relationship between Julia and himself.

**4. State the dramatic questions that must be answered by the end of the play? (Ordinarily, the dramatic question shares a close connection with the intrusion.)**

I think the dramatic questions in this play are as follows: How does the racism against immigrants relate to racism against the black community? How were people treated in poor communities, immigrant communities, and specifically the black community? Can white and black women rise in a white male dominated society? Can blacks and whites ever live in harmony given their scarred past?  
  
  
**5. Use Julia to answer the questions concerning character. Ball says, a character is revealed by what he/she does, that is the dramatic actions that are taken by that character. Examine what the character wants (NOTE: In Wedding Band the wants of Julia are in flux. They change as the play progresses). The wants of a character often encounter obstacles that get in the way of achieving those wants. Ball says there are 4 kinds of obstacles that frustrate the wants of a character. They are: a. Me against myself, b. Me against another individual or individuals, c. Me against society (that is law, social norms, etc.) and, d. Me against fate, the universe, natural forces, God or the gods. In answering these questions be sure to point to the particular obstacles that demonstrate these obstacles in the play.**

Julia wants, most of all, to be with Herman. She wants to get married to him. Jiulia loves Herman but she feels isolated within her community, she has no friends because of her secret relationship and she spends most of her time alone (at one point even taking up drinking); me against myself. However, because of their different races it is impossible for them to marry in the South; me against society. If that wasn’t bad enough, Herman owes his mother 3000 dollars in debt and he refuses to move or get married until after he has paid her back in full; me against another individual. And then lastly, the biggest obstacle of all, Herman gets Influenza and dies; me against fate.   
  
**6. The most important information in most plays takes place during theatrical moments. Identify the most theatrical moments in Wedding Band.**

The first theatrical moment that sticks out to me is during the opening scene when Teeta loses her mom’s quarter. She’s going on about it and Mattie is threatening her, yelling about how it’s the only quarter to her name- during all of the commotion they wake Julia and this is the first time she meets all of her neighbors. After that there’s the scene where the Bell Man tries to elicit sex from Julia, and then the first scene where we meet Herman after Julia’s neighbors find out she’s in an interracial relationship. The most theatrical scene though, is when Herman collapses on the porch while the women are praying.

**7. Provide at least three examples of images in Wedding Band. How does the title of the play help us understand the images in the play? (Remember Ball says that, “An image is the use of something we know that tells us something we don’t know.” He goes on to say that images invoke and expand, rather than define and limit.”)**

Ex 1: The last scene, where Julia talks Herman through dying. She paints a word picture of them sailing away on a ship, headed to New York, while his mother listens through the door.

Ex 2: The scene right after Herman’s mother leaves and Julia starts throwing bedding into the yard and talking about scrubbing off wherever they walked with hot water and lye.

Ex 3: The scene where Herman’s mother comes to see him in Julia’s room and Julia steps out onto the porch, but she can still hear everything. “Julia steps out onto the porch but hears every word said in the room, as if Herman were dead”  
  
  
**8. Ordinarily, there are many themes in most plays. List the themes in Wedding Band.**

Wedding Band focuses on social and political issues of the 60’s when it was written. Mainly it focuses on themes of race, class, equality, and misogyny- with the overarching question of how these all relate to each other.

**9. Most American plays have something to do with family and/or family relationships. What does family have to do with the dramatic action in Wedding Band? Perhaps you might argue for several different kinds of family in this particular play. What do you think?**

This play focuses on how a community can act as a family. Julia barely knows her new neighbors and yet Lula tells her about her dead boy, Mattie asks her to read a private letter from her husband for her, and Julia tells them about Herman. Even though they have all just met, they are openly sharing dark details about themselves and their “sins.”

On the other hand, is blood family. When Herman collapses from Influenza, Mattie and Fanny insist on calling his sister saying, “That’s his family, family is family.” They helped Julia move him back into the house and situate him, but beyond that the situation is too dangerous for the other women to take part in. Even though they take care of each other within their community, there as understanding that at some point the only people accountable to you, and the only people you are accountable to, are your family members.